

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



AB 1240 FACT SHEET

WHY

It's not just a cliché. For California's students, breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Decades of research conducted in thousands of classrooms nationwide conclusively shows that breakfast plays a critical role in students' academic achievement, memory and cognitive ability. By providing children with the nourishment they need, school breakfast also decreases tardiness, absenteeism and disruptive behavior, helping to create a classroom environment that's ideal for academic success. The science is clear: when more children eat breakfast, more children learn.

Breakfast improves students' physical, mental and emotional health. Eating breakfast is associated with lower obesity and diabetes rates, better nutrition, fewer nurse's office visits and increased physical activity. Eating breakfast can even help decrease anxiety, hyperactivity and depression. School breakfast itself tends to be more nutritious and balanced than breakfasts served elsewhere.

Three out of every four students in California miss out on the health and academic benefits of a nutritious school breakfast. Many barriers keep these children from eating breakfast at school.

4.3 million of California's public school students, 2.2 million of whom are low-income and at higher risk for food insecurity, aren't reached by the School Breakfast Program. Nearly 20 percent of California schools do not serve breakfast at all. Among those schools that do offer breakfast, the majority only serve it early in the morning before the start of the school day when many children have yet to arrive.

Hectic morning routines keep many families from serving a nutritious breakfast at home. Parents' work schedules, bus schedules and other pressing factors can keep children from arriving at school early enough to have breakfast before the bell. Due to these systemic challenges, the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) only reaches half of the students served by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This means that many of California's most vulnerable children aren't getting what they need each day to learn, grow and achieve.

WHEN

AB 1240 was announced on March 3, 2015. If enacted, the bill's provisions would be implemented across three school years starting in 2016-17. The law would be fully implemented in approximately 5,400 schools by July 1st, 2018.

WHAT

The *Breakfast After the Bell* bill, AB 1240, will bolster academic achievement and improve student well-being by increasing access to school breakfast on thousands of campuses across California. It will also provide the state with significant fiscal and economic benefits. By increasing utilization of the federal School Breakfast Program, AB 1240 will bring up to \$344 million in federal funding to California school districts, increasing state and local economic activity.

AB 1240 would accomplish all of this by requiring schools to make practical changes to their meal programs. These changes would align with levels of school and student need, making the most efficient use of existing state and federal funds.

Schools where at least **40 to 60 percent** of students are in need (i.e., eligible for free or reduced-price school meals) would be required to offer breakfast as an option to all of their students. This would make breakfast available to students in approximately 650 additional schools.

Schools where at least **60 to 80 percent** of students are in need would be required to offer breakfast after the start of the school day. This would ensure that students in nearly 5,000 schools have increased access to the breakfasts they need to be well nourished and ready to learn.

California's highest need schools, where **more than 80 percent** of students are in need, would be required to offer breakfast after the start of the school day and free of charge to all students. This would guarantee that students in approximately 3,000 schools have optimal access to the health and academic benefits of school breakfast. For these particularly high-need schools, offering breakfast at no cost to all students is made fiscally possible by available federal reimbursements.

In order to protect local decision-making, AB 1240 does not prescribe the specific practices schools and school districts should use to offer breakfast after the start of the school day. Schools can, for example, choose to serve breakfast in the classroom, implement grab n' go meal stations or offer a second chance breakfast during a mid-morning break.

WHO

AB 1240 was introduced by Assemblymembers Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) and Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond), and is sponsored by California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA). Asm. Bonta is the Chair of the Assembly Health Committee and serves on the Appropriations Committee. Asm. Thurmond serves on the Education Committee and Chairs the Budget Subcommittee on Health & Human Services. CFPA is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to nutritious, affordable food.